

REPORT

OF THE

SCHOOL COMMITTEE

OF THE

TOWN OF CANTON,

APRIL 2d, 1855.

PRINTED AND DISTRIBUTED BY ORDER OF THE TOWN.

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PRINTED BY WILLIAM BENSE.
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R E P O R T.

FELLOW CITIZENS :—

THE provision of Law which requires the School Committee to make a general report to the inhabitants of the whole town, of the state and condition of the schools in the several districts, is wise and salutary. The several school districts while they are little democracies in themselves, and have their own peculiar local interests, are, at the same time united in one common bond, and zealous for the prosperity and welfare of each other. And in the performance of the duty assigned to us, we have endeavored, according to the best of our ability, to act for the best interest of each and all.

We have considered that your largest, and best, and highest interests are invested in your schools. And from the means of knowledge which several years of service have afforded us, we judge that you are of the same opinion. From year to year we have witnessed and borne record to the steady and healthy increase of your zeal in the cause of popular education. Your appropriations have evinced your liberality. School houses, elegant and commodious, have been built to meet the growing wants of the present and future population. The average attendance has exceeded that of any former year, in our knowledge. The average age of the pupils is greater than that of former years, which fact is significant, and to be noted as an indication of a higher standard of instruction in the schools.

We have endeavored to establish a plan of labor that the progress of the schools might be systematic and thorough. We have sought to impress upon our youth the importance of knowledge for its own sake. We have urged upon them the necessity of their improving their golden opportunities, not that they may be seen of others, but for their own highest good. And it gives us pleasure here to bear testimony to the coöperative assistance of the Prudential Committees of the several districts. In the true spirit of devotion to the duties of their position, they have labored earnestly, and

at no little sacrifice of time and energy, to carry out the plans of your Committee.

We have acted for the whole town. We have known no North, no South, no East, no West,—but the Town, the whole Town, and nothing but the Town. The interests of “The Corner” have been to us as dear as the interests of “The Hardware” or “Neponset Village;” “York” and “Pleasant Street,” “Ponkapog” and “South End,” have shared equally in our labors and our care.

We proceed to speak in detail of the several schools.

District No. 1.

Whole number of children between the ages of 5 and 15, 69. Amount of money appropriated to the district,* \$277.57.

SUMMER TERM.

Prudential Committee, WILLIAM TAUNT; Teacher, Miss C. ABBY BATTLES. Length of school, four and a half months; wages of teacher, per month, including board, \$26; average attendance of scholars, 40; whole number of scholars 49; number of scholars under five years of age, 3.

Number of scholars present at examination, 44.

Miss Battles was a good, and a successful teacher. She had that rare gift, the ability to make oral instruction interesting and profitable to young children. It was a pleasant and beautiful element of this school. Her method of discipline was excellent. And from the commencement to the close of the term, there was a marked improvement in the studies and deportment of the pupils.

WINTER TERM.

Teacher, Mr. H. M. WOODS. Length of school, four and a half months; wages of teacher, per month, including board, \$40; average attendance of scholars, 47; whole number of scholars, 55; number of scholars under five years of age, 1; number of scholars over fifteen years of age, 3.

Number present at examination, 47.

The discipline of this school was somewhat relaxed, under the teaching of Mr. Woods. Truth compels us to say, that it was not characterized

* The money was appropriated by a committee of one from each District, chosen by the town.

by that strictness of discipline which we consider an important element of success. Yet the school went on, making a respectable degree of improvement in its studies. The closing Examination pleased us. The recitations in Arithmetic were good. Fair improvement had been made in Penmanship. Some fine specimens of map-drawing were exhibited, and the singing of the pupils gave evidence of a good deal of practise, and superior musical taste.

District No. 2.

Whole number of children between the ages of 5 and 15, 42. Amount of money appropriated to the district, \$246,74.

SUMMER TERM.

Prudential Committee, THOMAS FRENCH, JR.; Teacher, Miss AUGUSTA W. MILLIKIN. Length of school, four months; wages of teacher, per month, including board, \$18; average attendance of scholars, 33; whole number of scholars, 40.

Number of scholars present at examination, 32.

Miss Millikin was a faithful teacher, energetic and persevering. We have spoken of her in a former report. And the closing examination of her school was highly satisfactory. The spelling and reading of her pupils was truly excellent.

WINTER TERM.

Teacher, Mr. WILLIAM P. UPHAM. Length of school, two and one-fourth months; wages of teacher, per month, including board, \$40; average attendance of scholars, 41 $\frac{3}{4}$; whole number of scholars, 50; number of scholars over fifteen years of age, 10.

Number of scholars present at examination, 26.

This school made a hopeful beginning. Mr. Upham was a young man of polished manners, and a well chastised mind. He had no experience as a teacher, and while we felt that nervous anxiety which we ever feel, in putting an inexperienced teacher into a school, we saw in him many rare accomplishments and talents, which not unfrequently counterbalance the absence of experience. The sequel proved that we were partially mistaken. At our visits we did not find the school under that degree of discipline, necessary to complete success. The teacher was faithful, entirely devoted to his task, zealously seeking to advance the good of his pupils, willing

himself to be directed ; and a pure and gentle spirit breathed through all his acts. But insubordination, commencing among the older pupils, came creeping in. Mr. Upham lost the confidence of the parents ; and the school was brought to a premature close. The examination gave evidence of ability, on the teacher's part, and the Committee felt that, could Mr. Upham have continued his labors to the close of the term, the school would have done him honor.

In this connection, allow us to urge on parents the importance of giving a hearty coöperation and generous sympathy to teachers. Without these, no teacher can hope to succeed. Vain are all his efforts, fruitless his labors. His spirit is bowed down, his heart is saddened, his hands are powerless.

The school in this district is now under the care of Miss M. J. Dickerman, of whose experience and ability we shall speak in another part of this report.

District No. 3.

Whole number of children between the ages of 5 and 15, 256. Amount of money appropriated to the district, \$986.93.

FIRST PRIMARY DEPARTMENT.—SUMMER TERM.

Prudential Committee, EDGAR W. BRAY ; Teacher, Miss HELEN M. BEAUMONT. Length of school, five and a quarter months ; wages of teacher per month, including board, \$12 ; average attendance of scholars, 52 $\frac{1}{2}$; whole number of scholars, 77 ; number of scholars under five years of age, 22.

Number of scholars present at examination, Nov. 21, 55.

This school which was instituted in May, commenced with fifty-seven pupils. This number gradually increased until seventy-seven scholars were registered.

SECOND PRIMARY DEPARTMENT.—SUMMER TERM.

Teacher, Miss MARTHA CLARK. Length of school, six and three-fourths months ; wages of teacher per month, including board, \$16 ; average attendance of scholars, 49 ; whole number of scholars, 56.

Number of scholars present at examination, Nov. 22, 50.

The reduction of the number of scholars in this school by the formation of the first primary school was productive of great good. Miss Clark commenced the term with ninety-five pupils ! and she had labored with a school of nearly that number for nearly a year. And how well and how faithfully she labored we shall presently say.

INTERMEDIATE DEPARTMENT.—SUMMER TERM.

Teacher, Miss SARAH C. MESSENGER. Length of school, six and three-fourths months; wages of teacher per month, including board, \$20; average attendance of scholars, 53; whole number of scholars, 66.

Number of scholars present at examination, Nov. 23d, 54.

GRAMMAR DEPARTMENT.—SUMMER TERM.

Teacher, Mr. W. L. P. BOARDMAN. Length of school, (Spring term) three and three-fourths months; wages of teacher per month, including board, \$45,45⁵/₁₁; average attendance of scholars, 52; whole number of scholars, 57; number of scholars over fifteen years of age, 10.

Number of scholars present at examination, July 27th, 47.

GRAMMAR DEPARTMENT.—FALL TERM.

Teacher, Mr. H. O. WHITTEMORE. Length of school, two and a half months; wages of teacher per month, including board, \$50, ^{44 25}/₁₁; average attendance of scholars, 40; whole number of scholars, 53; number of scholars over fifteen years of age, 10.

Number of scholars present at examination, Nov. 23d, 43.

FIRST PRIMARY DEPARTMENT.—WINTER TERM.

Teacher, Miss H. M. BEAUMONT. Length of school, three and three-fourths months; wages of teacher per month including board, \$12; average attendance of scholars, 46; whole number of scholars, 75; number of scholars under five years of age, 14.

Number of scholars present at examination, 51.

SECOND PRIMARY DEPARTMENT.—WINTER TERM.

Teacher, Miss MARTHA CLARK. Length of school, three and three-fourths months; wages of teacher per month, including board, \$16; whole number of scholars, 60; average attendance of scholars, 48.

Number of scholars present at examination, 50.

INTERMEDIATE DEPARTMENT.—WINTER TERM.

Teacher, Miss SARAH C. MESSENGER. Length of school, three and three-fourths months; wages of teacher per month, including board, \$20; average attendance of scholars, 53; whole number of scholars, 60.

Number of scholars present at examination, 56.

GRAMMAR DEPARTMENT.—WINTER TERM.

Teacher, Mr. H. O. WHITTEMORE. Length of school, three and three-fourths months; wages of teacher per month, including board, \$45,45 $\frac{1}{2}$; average attendance of scholars, 56; whole number of scholars, 63; number of scholars over fifteen years of age, 24.

Number of scholars present at examination, 54.

We hope that the advantages resulting from classification of pupils, according to their ages and their attainments, will finally be enjoyed by all our schools, as they now are in this district, and in district No. 7. It is impossible for one teacher to instruct well pupils of all ages.

In this district we have four schools. The First Primary Department taught by Miss Beaumont, was formed in May last. It was composed of the youngest children. To teach these young children, requires skill, tact, patience and intelligence. All these qualities were united in the teaching of Miss Clark, who had taught the primary department for upwards of a year. The office of a primary teacher requires the exercise of the highest gifts; and no ordinary talent or experience are sufficient for the successful accomplishment of its various and delicate duties. It calls for more ingenuity, greater power of illustration to interest and instruct, literally

“To rear the *tender* thought,
And teach the *young* idea how to shoot,”

than to direct its action in after years.

We found Miss Beaumont eminently well qualified to win the attention and to awaken the minds of her pupils. Although we suggested the propriety of stricter discipline, yet we have seldom witnessed more thorough instruction, particularly in Arithmetic. They were all taught to sing. The relief afforded to Miss Clark by the formation of a fourth school, did not cause her to remit her exertions. As she had been a faithful teacher, so she continued to be. Her scholars made thorough and rapid improvement. The good order was remarkable. The examination was attended by many parents, and we did not wonder to hear one of them say that he had been perfectly astonished. Few schools attain to such correct spelling and reading. And there was a harmony in the method of teaching. Nothing was slighted. Every thing was well, perfectly taught.

The Intermediate Department is, as it has ever been, a model school. Industry, talent, entire devotion to her duty, and success have ever charac-

terized the teaching of Miss Messenger. We can say with emphasis, that this district has been highly favored in securing the services of so competent and so faithful primary school teachers. It is in a great degree owing to the faithfulness of instruction in these schools, that the Grammar Department is enabled to take so high a rank.

The Grammar department, under the tuition of Mr. Boardman continued its upward and onward course. That we might not compare ourselves with ourselves, and thus establish a low standard of excellence, we visited several of the best schools in different cities, and the result of our examination proved to us that we were justified in pronouncing this school inferior to no other. And Mr. Boardman's fame was not confined to Canton. Boston, eagle eyed, found him out, and secured his services in one of her schools.

In selecting Mr. Whittemore as his successor, we feel that we were guided by a deep sense of our responsibility. Of twenty-one applicants, five only were examined. And the result has satisfied us that when we chose Mr. Whittemore, we chose the right man. His knowledge is thoroughly accurate and extensive. Possessed of a wonderful power to win the love of his scholars, enthusiastic, quick and energetic in his movements, keenly alive to the reputation of his school, he has satisfied the high expectations we entertained of him at the beginning.

District No. 3 has now all the elements of good schools. 1st, A school-house, capable of accommodating all the scholars, and which in beauty of architecture, completeness of design, and adaptation is unequalled. Strangers, as they pass, pause to wonder, and admire. Its erection has stamped upon the town a high character for interest in the cause of education. 2d, A deep-seated interest in the minds of the people, in the success of their schools. Let the Registers bear witness to the visits of the parents. We can count them by hundreds. And, on examination days, even the large rooms were not large enough to contain them. 3d, Four good teachers, competent, faithful, diligent, experienced: "And what they have done but earnest of the things that they shall do."

District No. 4.

Whole number of children between the ages of 5 and 15, 30. Whole amount of money appropriated to the district, \$185.06.

SUMMER TERM.

Prudential Committee, JEDEDIAH TUCKER; Teacher Miss JULIA M. TILDEN. Length of school, four months; wages of teacher per month, including board, \$16; average attendance, of scholars, 21; whole number of scholars, 29; number of scholars under 5 years of age, 5.

WINTER TERM.

Prudential Committee, JESSE FENNO, Jr.; Teacher, Miss ANN CAPEN, Length of school, three months; wages of teacher per month, including board, \$20; average attendance of scholars, 16; whole number of scholars, 23; number of scholars under 5 years of age, 1; number over 15 years of age, 5.

Number of scholars present at examination, 19.

We think that the interest in this school, which we alluded to in our last report, has not subsided. The last examination was attended by an unusually large number of spectators. Evident improvement had been made in reading. Some new features of teaching had been introduced. We were particularly pleased with some specimens of map drawing, and with the reading of a paper called the "York Wreath," which latter we consider a great advance in the history of this school. The recitations of several of the classes was not such as we desire, but we may mention that in oral spelling, we found great proficiency.

District No. 5.

Whole number of children between the ages of 5 and 15, 53. Amount of money appropriated to the district, \$246,74.

SUMMER TERM.

Prudential Committee, FRANKLIN REED; Teacher, Miss M. J. DICKERMAN. Length of school, five and a half months; wages of teacher per month, including board, \$24; average attendance of scholars, 29; whole number of scholars, 55; number under 5 years of age, 2; number over 15 years of age, 1.

Number of scholars present at examination, 30.

The average attendance in this school was too low. We feel that the cause was not in the teacher. She was competent, faithful, and very

thorough in her instruction. But no school can prosper, nor attain to even a respectable degree of standing, where the attendance is so irregular.

WINTER TERM.

Teacher, Mr. GEORGE H. DICKERMAN, who left the school at the expiration of four weeks, to engage in other business, much to the regret of the Committee. He was succeeded by Mr. HORATIO BAILEY. Length of school, three months; wages of teacher per month, including board, \$40; average attendance of scholars, 35; whole number of scholars, 42; number of scholars over 15 years of age, 4.

Number of scholars present at examination, 32.

This is an interesting school, and we were sorry to lose the services of Mr. Dickerman. But the prudential committee was fortunate in securing the services of an able teacher who was competent to take up the school, and carry it on successfully. The instruction in this school was such as to merit our highest commendation. Extra hours were given to vocal music, which the skill of Mr. Bailey enabled him to teach in a most faithful manner.

District No. 6.

Whole number of children between the ages of 5 and 15, 70. Amount of money appropriated to the district, \$277.57.

SUMMER TERM.

Prudential Committee, OLIVER DEANE; Teacher, Miss MARY B. ROGERS, who was compelled by ill-health to relinquish her school at the expiration of two months, and was succeeded by Mrs. SYBEL S. COLLIER. Length of school, five months; wages of teacher per month, including board, \$24; average attendance of scholars, 41; whole number of scholars, 54; number under $\frac{1}{2}$ years of age 2.

Number of scholars present at examination, 52.

This school commenced most happily. Miss Rogers was a most excellent teacher, and entered upon her work with zeal. But she was compelled to resign her charge by reason of her failing health. Mrs. Collier, who succeeded her, was a teacher of rare gifts and attainments. Of mature age, of keen intellect, thoroughly conversant with, and experienced in business of teaching, she made a school which was a source of great satisfaction to

the Committee. Every thing was well taught, and pupils and parents alike respected and loved her.

WINTER TERM.

Teacher, Mr. JOHN S. WILLIS ; Assistant, Miss SARAH HUNT. Length of school, three and a half months ; wages of teacher per month, including board, \$42 ; wages of assistant, \$12 ; average attendance of scholars, 58 ; whole number of scholars, 83 ; number of scholars over 15 years of age, 6.

Number of scholars present at examination, 47.

The average attendance in this school was too low. This was caused by the parents of a large number of the pupils taking them from the school to put them to work in the mill. The manner and method of Mr. Willis' teaching were well suited to develop the resources of this school. Under his tuition the classes in arithmetic made great advancement. The average attendance in this district during the latter part of the term, did not warrant the expense of an assistant. Yet we should fail of our duty, did we not bear witness to the labors of Miss Hunt in this school.

District No. 7.

Whole number of children between the ages of 5 and 15, 78. Amount of money appropriated to the district, \$431.79.

SUMMER TERM.

Prudential Committee, ALBERT W. MAKEPEACE ; Teachers, Misses A. E. and J. M. IDE. Length of school four months ; wages of teachers per month, including board, \$24 each ; average attendance of scholars, 66 ; whole number of scholars, 84 ; number of scholars under 5 years of age, 9 ; number over 15 years of age, 1.

Number of scholars at the examination, 71.

WINTER TERM.—GRIDLEY SCHOOL.

PRIMARY DEPARTMENT.—Teacher, Miss JANE M. IDE. Length of school, four months ; wages of teacher per month, including board, \$27 ; average attendance, 42 ; whole number of scholars, 55 ; number of scholars under 5 years of age, 2.

Number of scholars present at examination, 42.

GRAMMAR DEPARTMENT.—WINTER TERM.

Teacher, Miss ANNIE E. IDE. Length of school, four months; wages of teacher per month, including board, \$27; average attendance of scholars, 31; whole number of scholars, 37; number of scholars over 15 years of age, 4.

Number of scholars present at examination, 33.

This year has been big with blessings to this school. A house, which, for beauty of architecture, and fitness to the purposes of its erection, for well chosen location, for convenience and compactness, for the liberality and good taste of its furnishing, and its perfect adaptation to the wants of the school,—we have never so much admired,—has been built, dedicated, and occupied. It seemed to us that the house was made for the schools, and the schools for the house, and the teachers for both!

The Misses IDE are well fitted by talents and acquirements, by the graces and virtues of character which dignify and adorn the teacher, to preside over these interesting schools. Their industry and zeal stop at nothing; their ability to enforce discipline with mildness, is unequalled. The proficiency of their pupils, their accuracy, their correct deportment, and above all, and over all, the quiet and unobtrusive manner of these teachers,

“ A most silver flow

Of subtle-paced counsel,

Winning its way with extreme gentleness,”

has endeared these schools to your committee. Such teachers, when obtained, should be retained.

The recitations at the examination were of an unusually high order, and we cannot forbear to say, that the recitation in history was never before surpassed in the experience of your Committee.

SUMMARY.

Whole amount of money raised by the town for schools,	\$2,500 00
Interest of Massachusetts School Fund,	154 40
	<hr/>
	\$2,654 40
Average wages paid to male teachers, per month, including board. In winter,	\$41 45 ⁵ / ₁₁
In summer,	45 45 ⁵ / ₁₁
Average wages paid to female teachers. In winter,	\$19 14
“ “ “ In summer,	20 40

Number of male teachers employed in winter,	5
“ “ “ in summer,	1
“ female “ in winter,	7
“ “ “ in summer,	10
Whole number of children in town between the ages of 5 and 15,	598
Whole number of scholars in all the schools, in summer,	568
Average attendance,	436
Whole number of scholars in all the schools in winter,	603
Average attendance,	463

AVERAGE AGE OF SCHOLARS IN YEARS.

District No. 1,	- - - - -	10½
“ 2,	- - - - -	11+
“ 3, First Primary,	- - -	6+
“ 3, Second Primary,	- - -	8+
“ 3, Intermediate,	- - -	10+
“ 3, Grammar Department,	- -	13½
“ 4,	- - - - -	10½
“ 5,	- - - - -	9+
“ 6,	- - - - -	9+
“ 7, Primary Department,	- -	6+
“ 7, Grammar Department,	- -	12+

BOOKS.

Before we close this report, we wish to say a word about books. By a provision of the Statutes it is made the duty of the school committee to determine what books shall be used in the schools. And this is a duty which requires the exercise of no little discretion. There is no end to the multiplication of school books. As quack medicines are made by pouring the contents of one vial into another, so school books are continually manufactured out of one another, until the whole world is filled with school books; and the publishers of each spare no efforts to introduce their publications into the schools. Agents, whose compensation depends almost entirely on their success, traverse the country, visit schools, teachers, and committees, and, were it not for the salutary operation of this law, would produce the most fatal confusion in the schools. They go from teacher to teacher, offering inducements to change; and in places where teachers and committees are constantly changed, they can easily effect their object.

We have given the subject of the selection of books the most careful consideration. We have not followed any one set or series of books in any branch of study. We have made selections from all, and have given them a fair trial before prescribing them. Books are an important consideration, but they do not make the school. The mind of the teacher is the great book of the school-room; and he or she is the best teacher who relies least upon books.

An important bill relating to this subject is now before the State Legislature, and has passed in the House. It authorizes and requires each city and town to furnish the school books used in all the public schools, under the supervision of the school committee, at the expense of said city or town; also to make such regulations as said committee may deem suitable, respecting the supply, and care, and presentation of said books.

It will be seen that under this new law, the duties of the school committee in regard to books will be increased, and the opportunities for the operation of book agents will be greatly enlarged.

Gentlemen,—let us say in conclusion,—it is one of the great birth-right blessings of our state, that we can thus be mindful of the prosperity of each other. Members of one body politic, we have one common interest. Each district comes up to this hall, sacred to the deliberations of freemen, to unite with each in plans and appropriations for the future. Like the members of a family, assembled on a festive day, around the family fireside, we meet in amity and peace. Our sons, who have been educated in our schools here, take upon them the duties of citizens. Some are gone forth to carry into other communities the principles here learned. May it always be your privilege to point to them with noble pride as the result of a liberal and wise policy in your system of public instruction.

“Certainly, (says Sir C. Lyell,) no people ever started with brighter prospects of uniting the promotion of religion and education, than the people of New England at this moment. Of the free schools which they have founded, and the plan of education adopted by them, for children of all sects and stations in society, they feel justly proud, *for it is the most original thing which America has yet produced.*”

SAMUEL B. NOYES,
SOLOMON CLARK.
SETH SALTMARSH.

Accepted, April 2d, 1855.

JER. KOLLOCK, *Town Clerk.*

